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COMMENTS ON THE SOVIET DIPLOMATIC BREAK WITH ISRAEL

The USSR could hardly accept Israel's apology for the bombing in Tel Aviv, in view of the high pitch of tension in Soviet-Israeli relations deliberately provoked by the Kremlin and its charges that the Israeli Government is a tool of American imperialism. In any event, the incident provided a convenient excuse for a step foreshadowed by violent Soviet propaganda attacks on the Israeli Government as part and parcel of the Zionist movement. The mounting anti-Israel propaganda, culminating in the break of relations, is thus a logical development in the current Orbit-wide "vigilance" campaign.

The expulsion of the Israeli diplomats from Moscow will facilitate involving them directly in charges of Zionist plotting. This would permit the "disclosure" of the hitherto missing high-level link between doctors inside the USSR and British and American intelligence centers outside the country.

Although this development in Soviet-Israeli relations may gratify the Arabs, it is not likely that this was its main purpose. Other Orbit countries may also find it expedient to break diplomatic relations with Israel. Any Orbit-wide rupture with Israel would have a further disquieting effect upon the nearly 3,000,000 Jews remaining within the Iron Curtain, including some 400,000 in Eastern Europe who could look to Israeli diplomatic representatives in their countries for spiritual leadership and could hope through them to find some means of escape.

While Israeli officials in past weeks sharply denounced the recent Soviet exhibition of anti-Zionism, they also opposed severance of relations, chiefly because of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain. Moscow's decision forces the Ben-Gurion Government from the technically neutralist position it has clung to, and removes any bargaining power which might have accrued from such an attitude.

The Israeli Communist Party, some of whose activities have already been restricted, may be banned; a small hard core will in any event remain underground. Some small-scale activity may be conducted by the left-wing splinter group which recently was expelled by the MAPAM party.

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